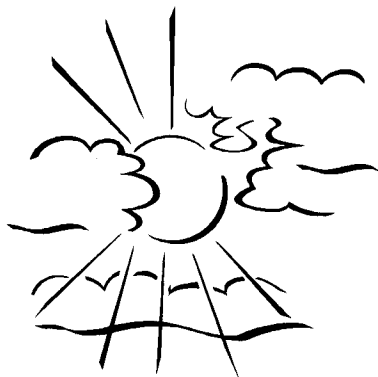


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Friday, Sept. 23, 2005

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Financial crisis grips nonprofits

Friday, September 23, 2005

BY LIZ COBBS

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

Rose Martin sat helplessly Thursday in her office at the Peace Neighborhood Center as Charlotte Turner got down on her knees and pleaded for help.

"What am I going to do?" Turner cried.

Turner needed money to help pay for cleaning up sewage that had backed up in the basement of her Ann Arbor townhouse. And she did not want to stay there with her children until it was cleaned up.

But there was nothing Martin could do to help. There was no money to give Turner.

In her 30 years of heading Peace Neighborhood Center, Martin has weathered many financial storms. But the latest fiscal crisis, she and other veteran human service providers say, is the worst yet.

Martin said the center's emergency assistance fund for families and individuals has been drained even as the private donations used to support the fund have dried up.

Instead of the \$100,000 in contributions that's needed, Martin said, what's coming in is a steady stream of phone calls from people looking for jobs, needing a place to live, or needing help to pay utilities, rent, car repairs or medical bills.

"In all my 35 years here, this is the first time we haven't had one check come in," said Martin, raising her hands in exasperation. "We have not had one donation since Hurricane Katrina struck."

Interestingly, Martin said, over a five-day period, she received more than a dozen calls from citizens and employers asking if she knew of displaced families from the Gulf Coast who needed jobs or other living assistance. What's happening at Peace Neighborhood Center is also occurring at other area social services agencies: Emergency financial requests from local residents for help with basic living expenses are mounting while government funding and public and private contributions are either shrinking or are nonexistent.

Meanwhile, people who have lost jobs, fallen ill, or can't keep pace with the rising cost of living are either denied financial assistance or only get a portion of the help they need.

"We've been very overwhelmed," said Helena Prince, executive director of the Ypsilanti-based Friends in Deed program. "This is the worst time I can remember in the 20 years I've been here."

Donations were down even before Hurricane Katrina, local service providers say. Adding to their worries is the fear that annual fundraising drives and year-end giving will take a hit because local contributions are being sent to hurricane relief efforts, similar to what happened during the relief efforts after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

It's too early to tell what the impact will be, but the timing is bad, said Susan Katz Froning, president and chief executive officer of Nonprofit Enterprise at Work, an Ann Arbor-based organization that works with nonprofit agencies.

Although charitable giving has stabilized at the national level, Katz Froning said, Michigan's economic woes are continuing to negatively impact nonprofits.

Mike Scholl, coordinator of the Washtenaw County's Human Services Community Collaborative, said nonprofits are having to balance the needs of local residents with those of families displaced by the hurricane. The HSCC is coordinating Hurricane Katrina relief efforts with local human service agencies.

"We know that this is one of the largest natural disasters of our lifetime and it's a struggle to try (to) balance that with issues we have at home," Scholl said. "Once we get past this situation, I think this will give us a real opportunity to have a good community discussion about what our needs are locally."

Among the top requests many local service agencies say they have been receiving are from people needing help with electricity payments. In July, Department of Human Services Director Marianne Udow said the state had used up \$117 million from the energy assistance fund, the first time since the early 1980s that the program ran out of money.

The fund, which comes from the federal government, won't be replenished until Oct. 1, the start of the state's new fiscal year.

In August alone, Friends in Deed spent \$4,390 in emergency assistance payments, doubling the amount the agency expended in July, said Kirstin Jackson, program manager for the interfaith nonprofit organization.

"(August) was one of the busiest months we've seen in 22 years of existence," Jackson said. "At one point, we were getting so many calls, we stopped to count them. Within a three-day period, we had taken in 50 new requests. That's a large amount of cases for a small agency like ours."

Betty Smith, 44, said that until recently she's always been able to work. But repeated bouts with bronchial-related illnesses, and a later diagnosis of asthma made it hard for her to keep her job.

"When I went to work, I would get sick again," said Smith, who's been working as a nurse's aide at a local hospital for the past eight years. "I knew I was having problems, but I didn't know at that time that I had asthma."

Because her health problems prevented her from working every day, Smith fell behind on her rent payments. She said she reluctantly sought help.

Smith said she first went to the state Department of Human Services office in Ypsilanti, but was denied assistance after DHS reviewed her work income for June and July.

Smith said she was given a DHS denial letter and told to take it to local agencies that offered financial assistance for emergency needs. Smith said she went to three agencies, two of which told her to come back in a week because they either didn't have funding or a case worker to review her request.

She said her dealings with workers at the agencies ranged from pleasant and understanding to one who was so rude that Smith asked for the supervisor.

In all, it took one month of going back-and-forth to agencies for Smith to get \$438 for rent. The remaining amount of the total \$588 she acquired on her own, she said. It was an experience, Smith said, she would never want to go through again.

"I was already sick and the way I was treated made me feel worse," Smith said. "When you have to ask for help, you already feel bad. But people should be treated with respect, with dignity. Just because you're in need of help doesn't mean you're a bad person."

Keith Bradley is not ill but says he needs a full-time job. The 43-year-old Ann Arbor resident said he worked with his brother for a while in Detroit but work slowed and he returned to Ann Arbor. He is a certified boiler operator by trade and hopes to land a job that pays at least \$10 an hour. Bradley said he's sent out more than 100 resumes but so far, has only received low-wage job offers that would not cover his basic expenses. To make ends meet, he's taken odd jobs, like custodial or catering work.

"The main things I'm hearing from (employers) are, 'Don't contact us, we'll contact you,' or 'Everything's on hold right now but as soon as something breaks through, we'll call you,'" Bradley said. "I need a job to pay my rent and feed myself."

In his spare time, Bradley said, he volunteers at Peace Neighborhood Center where he finds moral support.

Ann Arbor resident Jackie Campbell, 44, said she also finds emotional support there but occasionally asks for help from the center, even if it's \$50 for gas money or for another bill.

Campbell said she tries to stretch her pay from her \$7-an-hour housekeeping job but it's not always enough to take care of her and her two children. Campbell, who has a debilitating form of arthritis, said she does not have medical insurance and cannot afford to pay cash for medication that might help alleviate some of her pain. She takes over-the-counter pain relievers instead.

Campbell said she isn't looking for pity, though.

"I'm not a woe-is-me kind of person," she said. "I try to see the glass half full. I would love to have extras, but I don't have them right now. I'll just keep working."

On a recent day, the unemployed Bradley came into Martin's office shortly after she finished with a call from an employer asking if she knew anyone from New Orleans who needed a construction job.

Asked how he felt about job offers coming in but not for him and other local residents looking for work, Bradley said: "I feel like we're the flood victims, but without the water."

Liz Cobbs can be reached at lcobbs@annarbornnews.com or (734) 994-6810. Staff Photographer Alan Warren contributed to this report.

Published September 23, 2005

Hurricane relief leaves local needy frustrated

**Homeless ask why help pours in for
storm evacuees, but not for them
Massive focus on Katrina, Rita
overshadows local plight**

By Stacey Range
Lansing State Journal

Dennis Allison was more than happy to help set up area apartments for Hurricane Katrina evacuees in recent weeks.

But when he walked into one of the apartments, it hit him: He's homeless, too, and no one was stepping up to help him. "I'm in the same situation, and I don't have anywhere to go," said Allison, 55. "I'm just part of the forgotten people - the local homeless."

As the state and local communities continue to take in Katrina evacuees and the Gulf region braces for Hurricane Rita, it's the question many are afraid to ask: What about our own needy?

While no one wants to undermine the generous efforts of local agencies and residents, some can't help but wonder why it takes a crisis to spur people to action. Is it the barrage of graphic images played over and over on TV?

Is it the sheer magnitude of having hundreds - possibly thousands - dead and thousands more homeless?

Is it the sense that something similar could happen to anyone?

Experts say it's all of the above.

"Disasters like this arouse an acute reaction to respond," said Dr. Arnold Werner,

professor emeritus of psychiatry at Michigan State University. "It's in the human nature."

Consider what's happened locally:

When Lansing officials got word earlier this month that Katrina evacuees were on their way, the city jumped into action.

Within about 24 hours, agencies throughout the area mobilized to secure 92 apartment units and homes, access to health care, space in Lansing schools and transportation for evacuees sheltered at Battle Creek's Fort Custer.

Residents, too, have done their part, donating nearly \$1.3 million to the mid-Michigan chapter of the American Red Cross for relief efforts. That's in addition to the mounds of clothing, bedding, shoes and household items given.

Amazing, yes. Commendable, of course. But it has some folks, such as Allison, feeling neglected.

The Army veteran was among a handful of homeless people who went to various churches and agencies recently to sort clothes and set up apartments for Katrina evacuees. When they returned to the New Hope Day Center, several asked their caseworkers if they could get some of the help the evacuees were getting.

"They don't understand the difference between them and the Katrina victims, and why they can't get help, too," said Patrick Patterson, director of operations for the Volunteers of America's homeless day center.

"Where is the outpouring for them?"

Different responses

It's a difficult and complicated question to answer.

In general, people respond differently to widespread disaster such as Katrina and everyday social problems such as homelessness, Werner said.

"Disasters and catastrophes create a temporary sense of community and bonding with the people who are suffering," he said.

Another factor is that most people can't imagine themselves being homeless, save for a natural disaster such as a hurricane or tornado wiping out their home. In those cases, Werner said, we see our own vulnerabilities.

That was the case for Stacy Briggs. The mother of five from Eaton Rapids never thought much about the homeless until her brother and sister-in-law lost two children, two friends and all of their belongings to a house fire in Tennessee about five years ago. The response from the Eaton Rapids community where her brother's family used to live has inspired her to do more since then.

"It was just so overwhelming, so I give when I can now," Briggs said.

Her philanthropy is both national and local. Briggs and her husband donated money, blood and blankets after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. She also donates to toy drives at Christmas and tries to drop a few dollars in the Salvation Army's red kettles whenever she sees them.

"It's what I can do," Briggs said.

For many, the magnitude of Katrina and mass media coverage made it almost impossible not to empathize with Katrina's victims.

"It's been very graphically presented all over the world," said John Cauley, executive director of the mid-Michigan chapter of the American Red Cross.

"When you see bodies floating in water, when you see people sitting on rooftops, when you see several thousand people in a shelter, people respond, and they thank God they are not in that situation."

Many are homeless here

But many, even in Michigan, are in situations in which they have little or nothing.

According to state estimates,

- 40,000 homeless people live in Michigan.

- 1 million Michigan residents receive food stamps every month.
- One-third of Michigan's children live at or near the poverty level.

Even the New Hope Day Center, where Allison and about 100 other homeless people find help every day with housing and job searches, has struggled to stay open this year. The shelter, at 430 N. Larch St., was set to close earlier this year after a 40 percent drop in revenue from car donations - its largest income source. Donations have kept its doors open on a monthly basis, but Patterson doesn't know yet what's going to happen at the end of September.

Sue Bigford feels that uncertainty daily. The 48-year-old Lansing woman quit her job as a medical receptionist when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in December 2003. She gets \$900 a month in Social Security disability payments and \$130 a month in food stamps. Her house payment is \$650 a month. The rest barely pays the bills.

"I can hardly make my house payment, but there's no organization in town to help me," Bigford said. "I don't want to sound heartless. I'm just asking for a little help to make it through, too."

She and many others hope the veil lifted on the disparity in the South will open people's eyes to the local poor as well.

"This should be a wake-up call that this kind of disparity exists all over the place," said Cheval Breggins, spokesman for St. Vincent Catholic Charities, the agency leading the areawide relocation effort of Katrina evacuees.

"It existed in the Gulf Coast before Katrina, and it exists here in Lansing. It shouldn't take a disaster to make us be more compassionate."

By the numbers

\$1.25M: amount collected for Katrina relief efforts by the mid-Michigan chapter of the

American Red Cross

40,000: number of homeless people in Michigan

1 million: Michigan residents receiving food stamps (estimated)

1/3: proportion of Michigan children who live at or near poverty level

Sources: Michigan Department of Human Services, Center for Civil Justice

How to help

- To make a financial donation to the New Hope Day Center, call the local Volunteers of America office at 484-4414, ext. 100.
- Contributions by credit card may be directed to the Michigan shelter through the national Web site at www.voa.org.
- To donate a vehicle, call (800) 552-1515.

More evacuees

- Eleven more Hurricane Katrina evacuees were resettled in Lansing on Wednesday, according to St. Vincent Catholic Charities. That is expected to be the last group of evacuees coming to the capital city from Fort Custer in Battle Creek. To date, St. Vincent Catholic Charities has resettled more than 100 people displaced by the Aug. 29 hurricane, with 64 of them coming from Fort Custer.

Contact Stacey Range at 377-1157 or srange@lsj.com.

United Way drive

Support from newcomers to area especially needed

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, September 23, 2005

Widespread and high-profile fundraising for victims of Hurricane Katrina, which deserves the highest praise, does not excuse us from continuing our traditional backing of local charities. The United Way of Genesee County, for instance, cannot afford to be overlooked as it tries to meet its annual campaign goal, which has been downsized once again because of the enormous exodus of local jobs the past 25 years.

Compounding the loss of those tens of thousands of autoworker paychecks is the dwindling number of locally based companies, which tend to be more generous in their giving than branches of national corporations, whose donations often are based on a cut-and-dried formula. Therefore, the burden is especially heavy on Genesee County residents with the means to help those in need. We make a special plea to those new to the Flint area, who perhaps are not yet connected emotionally to our institutions because their jobs and roots are miles away.

Trust us on this: The local United Way is worth supporting, both because of who it helps and the sensible way the charity makes the most of donations to it. Needs are targeted rather than agencies, which better prioritizes scarce dollars. The \$5 million the United Way expects to raise will be used in four primary areas: children and youth, older adults, strengthening families and basic needs. Federal and state grants that money attracts likely will double its impact.

However, excellent management can do only so much to compensate for dwindling resources. In the county's wealthier days, a United Way campaign raised more than \$9 million. Though such a goal is impossible for the foreseeable future, fundraising should be improving now that the county's population is again growing, particularly in the south end.

That welcome influx stems from advantages this community offers, which are more than an affordable home and convenient freeways. A good part of our quality of life results from generous people who care about the place they live and want to make it better. Giving to the Genesee County United Way aids that cause.

Grand Rapids Press

September 23, 2005

Letters

Local needs, too

I think it's great that people are giving their money, homes, supplies, time and prayers to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We are a nation of generous people, especially when it comes to disaster relief.

But, what about the people here in Grand Rapids who need help? I'm talking about the people we probably pass on the street every day such as homeless people, drug addicts and single parents working two jobs and still not having enough money for rent.

I believe that Grand Rapids is home to some of the most generous people in the country. We've proven that generosity with all the money and supplies we've sent to hurricane victims. So tell me: If we have so much money to give to victims of natural disasters, why do we have so much poverty in our city? And if people don't believe there's poverty here, take a drive through the inner city. The suburbs are even full of people who can just barely get by.

Yes, I gave money to hurricane relief, but I gave only half of what I had available. The other half went to a local charity to help meet the needs of people here at home.

Next time people see the heartbreaking images of Katrina's victims, think about it: There are victims here in Grand Rapids too -- victims of the vicious cycle of poverty.

ROSE SWICK SCHLAPPI

Grand Rapids

UNEMPLOYMENT FALLS ACROSS STATE IN AUGUST

The entire state saw unemployment rates fall in August, the Department of Labor and Economic Growth announced Thursday. But employment also fell over most of the state, the report said.

For the state as a whole, the unadjusted unemployment rate was 6.3 percent, down from 7.6 percent in July and from 6.6 percent in August 2004. But the fall was the result of a greater decline in the jobless than in those with jobs. The total workforce in the state fell to 5.148 million from 5.185 million in July, though this was an increase from the 5.106 million in August 2004. Of that total workforce, 324,000 were unemployed, compared to 394,000 in July and 339,000 in August 2004.

“Unemployment rates typically fall in August throughout the state,” said Rick Wacławek, director of the Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. “Recalls in auto-related manufacturing due to the end of the retooling period lowered unemployment. Summer and seasonal employment began to wind down in August, reducing the size of the workforce in most regions in Michigan.”

Ann Arbor held its place as the region with the lowest unemployment, at 4.1 percent, down from 4.8 percent in July, but up from 4 percent in August 2004. The region was also one of the few with an increase in employment, to 182,400 from 180,800 in July and 179,100 in August 2004.

Flint had the highest unemployment at 7.3 percent, but the fall from 9.5 percent in July represented the largest decline for the month. But its total workforce was also down over both of the year and the month, with 210,000 in August, 216,600 in July and 210,500 in August 2004, when unemployment was 7.6 percent. Employment was 194,600 in August, 196,100 in July and 194,500 in August 2004.

For the year, Monroe saw the largest unemployment increase to 6 percent from 5.7 percent in August 2004. But that was down from 7.7 percent in July. Muskegon-Norton Shores and Niles-Benton Harbor tied for the largest unemployment drop for the year, the former to 6.2 percent from 7.1 percent in August 2004 and the latter to 6.3 percent from 7.2 percent.

Detroit-Warren-Livonia had the largest increase in workforce, at 2.247 million in August from 2.232 million in July and 2.225 million in August 2004. And more of those new workers were working, with unemployment falling to 7 percent from 8.1 percent in July

and 7.3 percent in August 2004. Total employment was 2.089 million in August from 2.05 million in July and 2.063 million in August 2004.

Muskegon-Norton Shores saw the most significant decline in total workforce, with 90,200 working or seeking work in August compared to 93,500 in July, though up from 90,100 in August 2004. of those, 84,600 were working in August, 86,000 in July and 83,700 in August 2004.

Among the counties, Baraga had the highest unemployment at 9.2 percent while Mackinac had the lowest at 2.9 percent.

For the state, the number of payroll jobs increase 21,000 to 4.321 million for the month. Of those, 16,000 were manufacturing jobs. But payroll jobs were still down for the year, the report said.

Posted: 9-23-2005

Jobless rates in August improve; another sign of local economic recovery

By KEVIN BRACISZESKI
Ludington Daily News Staff Writer

Unemployment rates for Mason, Manistee, Oceana and Lake counties all dropped between July and August, and the jobless rates for all four counties were lower than their August 2004 rates.

Mason County's August unemployment rate of 5.9 percent was below the 6.8-percent state estimate for July, and the 7.2-percent rate for August 2004.

According to Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, the number of people in the labor force for all four counties also fell during the past month, as well as the number of working residents in Mason, Manistee and Oceana counties.

State officials estimated Michigan's unemployment rate for August was 6.3 percent, down from the 7.6-percent estimate for July. The August rate for both Oceana and Manistee counties was 6.4 percent, and the Lake County rate for August was 8 percent.

"It's certainly another indication of improvement," Mason County Economic Development Corp. Executive Director Bill Kratz said about the county's 5.9 percent unemployment rate, "and we're below the state average."

Kratz said he believes the county's numbers for labor force and employed residents declined between July and August because of people who returned to college classes in August after working at summer jobs.

"I also believe the economy is generally slowly improving," he said, "and if you look at the (unemployment rates for) area counties, we're certainly the strongest."

Ypsilanti girl says she killed infant

Girl found delinquent on a charge of child endangering

By Ann Arbor News Staff and The Associated Press

The girl was found delinquent on a charge of child endangering, a second-degree felony, on Thursday by Marion County Common Pleas Court Judge Thomas Jenkins, the Marion Star newspaper reported.

Marion County Assistant Prosecutor Larry Babich said the 11-year-old became upset over the toddler's crying and suffocated her with a pillow case.

The victim, Destiny Hood, of Cleveland, died July 31.

Jenkins ordered the 11-year-old girl to undergo a psychiatric evaluation before sentencing. She could be ordered into youth detention or placed on probation.

The girl will remain in her mother's custody until final disposition of the case on Nov. 4.

"This crime has affected myself, my family, everyone around us in so many ways," the victim's mother said in a statement read by the prosecutor's office in court Thursday, the local NBC-TV affiliate reported. "It's not fair that my baby is dead and the defendant gets to go home and be told not to do it again."

Authorities say the children were visiting relatives and had been left with six other children with the 14-year-old boy.

Police said the 14-year-old boy called 911 and when authorities arrived, no adults were there. Sherri Jones, who lives at the house, has pleaded innocent to a misdemeanor count of child endangering.

Dad says he saw signs of sex abuse on daughter

PUBLISHED: September 23, 2005

By Chad Halcom
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A Warren man facing a first-degree murder charge for the drowning death of his 3-year-old daughter said Thursday he started drinking hours before the slaying as he set himself on a path toward murder and suicide to be with the child forever.

"I wanted her and me to be together in heaven, so nobody could hurt her anymore," the accused Daniel Anthony Wells testified in his own defense in a trial at Macomb County Circuit Court.

"Nothing could hurt her, and nothing could hurt me."

His alleged plan, however, didn't work out well according to testimony and records in the case. Wells himself survived after ex-wife Nora Wells found him and loosened him from a makeshift noose at his home, while forensic evidence suggests that he failed to keep 3-year-old Julia Wells from suffering as he'd hoped.

"Drowning is a very traumatic means of death. It elicits a strong violent reaction in the body, and a strong emotional fear of dying," said Macomb County forensic pathologist Werner Spitz, who performed an autopsy on the slain Julia. "This is by no means a quiet cause of death."

Officials and witnesses have said the child's mother, Nora Wells, arrived at Mr. Wells' home in Warren on Aug. 15, 2004, to pick up Julia following a weekend visitation and found Mr. Wells hanging from a makeshift noose made of a power cord or cable. She cut him down, let her mother into the house and then found the girl's body laid out in a crib, still damp from drowning, along with various writings on the walls of the home about his intentions.

Wells testified Thursday that he "started drinking everything I had in the home" late the previous evening and started downing pills from the medicine cabinet that belonged to his estranged wife, after Julia arrived at the home for the visitation and he allegedly found evidence of redness and swelling around her vagina while changing her diaper.

Also on the stand Thursday were two sisters of Wells, who corroborated his story about seeing signs of sexual abuse on Julia twice in the months before her death. But prosecutors pointed out that one sister, Constance Thompson, had exchanged some angry e-mails with Nora Wells in which she indicated she believes the child's mother is also responsible in part for the slaying.

"The basic message of those e-mails was something like that 'It takes two to dance,' or that when something goes wrong, two people were responsible," said Therese Tobin, chief trial attorney for Macomb County prosecutors. "She was pretty unapologetic about that view, and remained so today."

Prosecutors contend that Wells may have killed his daughter because he felt vindictive toward Nora Wells for leaving him and having custody of Julia, or that he may have felt financially strained by the loss of her income and by child support payments he had failed to make to her. The couple is divorced and Nora had been living outside the home with her mother in Garden City since the preceding January. The former Mrs. Wells attended court proceedings with a heart-shaped locket said to hold some of her daughter's ashes and listened to her ex-husband's testimony, but declined to comment on it afterward.

"I didn't say anything (to Nora, about the suspected abuse) because I thought that she would use that against me, because we were getting divorced," Wells testified. "I figured she'd say that if (Julia) was getting molested it was being done by me."

Defense attorney Ronald Goldstein contends Wells isn't guilty of premeditated murder because he was swayed by alcohol and drugs and by the belief he could protect the child from suspected abuse by Nora's boyfriend.

But prosecutors noted that Wells' sisters never told police of their suspicions about sexual abuse, even when they took statements from Wells' family after the crime, and Tobin said she only became aware that would become an issue in the trial by way of some written records she received in the discovery process later.

Goldstein said there's a simple reason Wells' family never mentioned the abuse to police.

"They probably didn't ever ask," he said. "Cops often don't ask specific questions like that during questioning like this or when they're getting statements. It was probably more like 'do you recall anything suspicious,' or things like that. You know how cops are."

Testimony is expected to conclude today after cross-examination of Wells. If convicted as charged, Wells would face life in prison with no chance of parole.

Teacher on leave waives hearing in teen sex case

Friday, September 23, 2005

JOE SNAPPER
THE SAGINAW NEWS

CARO -- A 27-year-old teacher is a step closer to a criminal trial on charges of carrying on a sexual affair with an eighth-grade student after she waived today's preliminary hearing, prosecutors said.

Kristen Margrif of Mayville arrived at the Tuscola County Courthouse on Thursday to waive the hearing.

Assistant Prosecutor Tim Rutkowski said Margrif's next court date is her arraignment at 8:30 a.m. Monday, Oct. 3, before Circuit Judge Patrick R. Joslyn.

Margrif, an English teacher at Kingston High School, is accused of having trysts with the male student in her car and inside a resale shop where the pupil worked in June and July.

She faces seven counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct with a person younger than 16 -- a 15-year felony -- and a misdemeanor fourth-degree count.

Last month, Prosecutor Mark Reese offered to allow Margrif to plead guilty to three counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. As part of the deal, prosecutors would not oppose a judge capping her sentence to one year in jail and four years of probation.

Margrif remains free on a \$45,000 personal recognizance bond, Rutkowski said.

Kingston Superintendent George Bednerek said Thursday she is on a voluntary unpaid leave from her teaching duties until her court proceedings conclude. v

Joe Snapper is a staff writer for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9715.

Decade later, stepdad convicted in murder case

Friday, September 23, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

REED CITY -- For almost a decade, David Boss lived the free life he deprived of the 14-year-old stepdaughter he thought he had impregnated.

Now the 41-year-old faces up to life in prison for stabbing and strangling to death Jennifer Marie Gottschalk -- the victim of years of his molestation, authorities said -- at an Osceola County rest stop in 1996.

Boss, a truck driver from Burdell, was convicted of first-degree murder Thursday by an Osceola County Circuit Court jury after a two-hour deliberation, according to the state attorney general's office.

"David Boss has finally received justice for the heinous murder of his stepdaughter," Attorney General Mike Cox said in a prepared statement.

The verdict came more than nine years after a group of sixth-graders stopped on May 17, 1996 at the Betty Walker Scenic Outlook on U.S. 131 and found the body of the middle school student from Merritt, a town in Missaukee County.

Area law enforcement were unable to gather enough evidence to arrest Boss until Cox's office used investigative subpoenas to force those close to the case to speak under oath.

Boss' sister, Beverly Boss, testified in February her brother confessed to her he had killed Gottschalk because he feared she was pregnant with his child.

September 23, 2005

Parents can get tips on foiling abductions

FROM TRAVERSE CITY RECORD EAGLE STAFF REPORTS

KALKASKA - Information about how to prevent child abduction will be the subject of a program at Birch Elementary School next month.

The program includes guest speaker Erin Runnion, the mother of Samantha Runnion, a five-year-old who was abducted and murdered in 2002 in California. Runnion started the Joyful Child Foundation in memory of her daughter.

The program also will feature tips to avoid child abduction, information about child identification cards, and a self-defense program for women over 18 put on by the state police. The event runs from 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Oct. 3.

For more information contact Joanie Moore at (231) 587-8700 or moore@torchlake.com.

Boy, 15, to be tried as adult

Trace Christenson

The Battle Creek Enquirer

September 23, 2005

A 15-year-old Battle Creek boy charged with firing a gun at the Cereal Festival will be tried as an adult.

Matthew Bolden could be sentenced to five years in prison if convicted in Calhoun County Circuit Court.

Bolden is charged with carrying a concealed weapon, a felony and reckless discharge of a firearm, a misdemeanor.

He was arrested after Battle Creek Police said he fired a .22 caliber handgun into the air outside Kellogg's Cereal City USA on June 11.

Charges of receiving and concealing stolen property and felony firearm were dismissed at an earlier hearing.

Judge Allen Garbrecht, a family court judge, ruled that Bolden should be tried as an adult after hearing from probation officers and a psychologist, who all recommended Bolden's case should be waived from juvenile to adult court.

Garbrecht cited the seriousness of shooting a gun — even into the air — while in a large crowd of people, and Bolden's long criminal history as a juvenile.

Authorities said Bolden has a record that includes arson, criminal sexual conduct, home invasion, unarmed robbery, assault and vandalism.

"His record is incredibly disturbing since 1997," said Assistant Prosecutor Mike Lind.

But Defense Attorney Richard Stevens said the new case is not the one that authorities should use to possibly send Bolden to prison.

"This is not the type of case to trigger drastic Draconian actions," Stevens argued to the judge.

"They are willing to warehouse this young man, which cures nothing. If they think it is going to help him, it ain't going to work."

Randy Haugen, a psychologist, said Bolden told him he fired the gun because others were trying to assault him.

"He viewed himself as the victim of the system and said the court is making a bigger deal than it was," Haugen said. "He didn't see the need for treatment and that if people would leave him alone, he would be OK."

Haugen said the incident was serious because shooting a gun among hundreds of people not only could have caused physical harm, but also "psychological harm among people about their feeling of safety in the community."

Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com.

Originally published September 23, 2005

Veto Punk Prison

Youth facility deserves to be cut from budget

Detroit Free Press

September 22, 2005

Political pressure is mounting on Gov. Jennifer Granholm to back off on closing the inefficient and unnecessary Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin.

That's bad news, because standing up to such pressure is not what Granholm does best. This time, though, she needs to straighten her spine and do what she knows is best for Michigan: End the \$18-million-a-year contract with the private, for-profit Geo Group to operate the so-called punk prison.

For its size, the youth prison is one of Michigan's most costly and inefficient. Moreover, the maximum-security prison has been criticized for neglecting health and education needs and for housing mostly lower-security offenders. Even if those problems could be fixed, the 6-year-old prison is no longer needed -- and maybe never was. The expected wave of young so-called superpredators never happened.

The Department of Corrections has done a better job of managing its population in recent years. Michigan was one of the few states to lower its prison population in 2003 and 2004, and Corrections has other initiatives to contain costly prison growth. The state now has room to transfer the 480 teenage boys to strictly segregated areas within adult institutions.

Republicans have argued that closing the youth prison would hurt Baldwin's economy, as if prisons are employment agencies. Like other government programs, prisons exist to provide necessary services, not subsidize jobs.

Corrections' 2005-06 budget includes funding to run the prison, but Granholm has said she would veto the money. Unfortunately, Republicans still have reason to hope, because Granholm has backed down in the past.

This time she should not. Michigan can't afford to keep prisons open simply to provide jobs or appease politicians.

Governor wants heat help for poor

Friday, September 23, 2005

By Sarah Kellogg

Kalamazoo Gazette Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- With winter heating costs expected to spike as a result of Hurricane Katrina and, possibly, Hurricane Rita, Gov. Jennifer Granholm is leading a national effort to win more federal home-heating assistance for the states.

Granholm is asking governors to sign a letter urging President Bush to increase funding more than 70 percent for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), to \$3.48 billion for 2006, up from \$2 billion this year.

"For northern states, many of which are still struggling because they never fully recovered from the recession, the energy price increases this winter will be a huge blow," John Burchett, Granholm's Washington office director, said Monday.

LIHEAP provided about \$117 million in heating assistance to nearly 1 million low-income Michigan residents through grants and tax breaks this year.

While Granholm and the governors lobby the president, lawmakers from northern states, including Michigan Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, are working to push an increase of \$1.2 billion in LIHEAP emergency funding for 2005 through Congress with any new spending bill for the Gulf states.

A vote on the spending package could come as early as next week.

And a bipartisan group of House and Senate members is looking at increasing the 2006 federal appropriation for LIHEAP up to \$4 billion. The spending bills for the 2006 budget year, which begins on Oct. 1, haven't been finalized yet.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that natural gas prices will rise by as much as 77 percent this winter in the Midwest, while heating-oil prices could go up by as much as 33 percent and propane by up to 43 percent.

For the average family using heating oil, costs are expected to rise to \$1,666 this winter compared to \$1,263 last year, according to the energy information agency. Winter heating costs for natural-gas users could jump from \$957 to \$1,568.

"Energy is simply going to be beyond the realm of affordability for millions of low-income households," said David Fox, a spokesman for the Campaign for Home Energy Assistance, a Washington-based energy advocacy group.

Still, Michigan won't be as bad off as other states, with increases expected to be about 40 percent, said Judy Palnau, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Public Service Commission, which regulates the state's utilities. Michigan's natural-gas prices are lower because state utilities have already been able to purchase and store natural-gas stocks, utility officials said.

"Seventy-six percent of the gas our customers will need is either in our storage system or under contract," said Dan Bishop, of Jackson-based Consumers Energy. "Michigan has the second-lowest cost in the country next to Alaska because we have so much already in storage."

Consumers Energy, which provides natural gas to about 85,000 customers in Kalamazoo County, has the second largest underground natural-gas storage capacity in the nation, said Jeff Holyfield, Consumers Energy spokesman. Storage fields in rural areas of Clair, Allegan, St. Claire and

Macomb counties allow it to buy and store natural gas when prices are lower in the spring and summer, he said.

Last year Consumers Energy customers in Kalamazoo County paid an average of \$130 per month for natural gas during the winter heating season, Nov. 1 through the end of March. They paid about \$120 per month during the same season the year before, he said.

State energy officials say the time is now for Michigan homeowners to start looking at weatherization and other energy conservation options, such as turning down water heaters or encasing water heaters in thermal blankets.

Consumers Energy is advising its low-income customers to take advantage of a home-heating credit before a sign-up deadline expires in seven days. The credit, which is funded through LIHEAP, provides an energy draft that those who meet low-income guidelines can use to pay portions of their winter energy bills.

Bishop said LIHEAP isn't the only option for families struggling with heating bills. They can also find heating assistance through their local utility, which generally works with the Salvation Army and other charities to help underwrite the cost of home heating bills.

Gazette Business Editor Al Jones contributed to this report.

Winterized homes are cozier, cost less to heat

Inspect for air gaps and cover windows with plastic

Friday, September 23, 2005

BY HOPE LASH

Ann Arbor News Special Writer

As the air gets cooler and heating costs get higher, many homeowners are taking the time to make adjustments that will allow them to stretch their energy dollars through the winter months. Inspecting your house for air leaks around doors and windows can save a lot of money on your heating bills.

"Gaps and breezes around window and door seals should be filled with caulk," said homeowner Steve Fuller of Hamburg Township. Caulking that is cracked or peeling will also need to be redone. Once windows are sealed, you might want to add a plastic covering to your windows this winter, as Fuller is planning to do, to better insulate windows. Notable gaps at the bottom of exterior doors can be handled with foam, weather-stripping or installing a door sweep.

Another source of home heating loss is electrical outlets on the outside walls.

"Cold air can come through these outlets," said A.J. Minion of Pinckney. "Putting an insulator behind the face plate is a cheap solution and can lower your utility bills."

Avoid teeth chattering inside your home on the first cold day by checking your furnace early in the fall to make sure it works as well as changing the filter.

Run a humidifier during the winter months to help lower heating costs. "If you have the proper humidity in your home, it will feel warmer using less heat," according to Fuller.

Chimneys should also be checked for creosote and cleaned if necessary to avoid unwanted chimney fires.

Clean your gutters after the leaves fall and check for clogs.

"Clogged gutters will lead to icy build ups in the winter that could damage your home," said Fuller.

Minion recommends gutter de-icing kits. "They're real handy," said Minion. "You install the heated cables along the roof line. They will keep your gutters de-iced this winter and prevent shingle or gutter damage."

If you have ceiling fans in your home, Fuller reminds homeowners to reverse the ceiling fan rotation to ensure that the heated air in your home circulates properly. There should be a switch on the fan marked "reverse." This will circulate the warm air without blowing air down.

"Cleaning your dryer vents is simple to do and will help your dryer be more energy efficient when operating," said Phil Nelson, who owns a home along the Huron River.

Once the inside is completed, there are several jobs outside that should be done before winter.

Garden hoses and outside faucets should be drained to prevent water freezing inside them.

Outside water faucets should be shut off from the valve inside the house plus underground water sprinklers should be blown out by a professional.

"You should cover your air conditioner," said Nelson. "There's also still time to put another coat of sealant on your deck or asphalt driveway if necessary."

Minion noted that new concrete sidewalk and driveway owners should avoid using regular salt that will damage the concrete's surface.

The lawn should be raked to remove any thatch (grass residue) build up from summer. Too much thatch can lead to pest and lawn disease problems. General lawn clean up should also include inspecting trees for dead branches that could fall under snow weight.

Once patio furniture is stored for winter, you should check the snow thrower's spark plugs and fill it with gas because the first snowfall is not far away.

Granholt: 30,000 uninsured on state discount drug program

9/23/2005, 10:46 a.m. ET

The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A state program that allows uninsured residents to get prescription drugs at a discount has signed up 30,000 senior citizens and working families in its first year, Gov. Jennifer Granholm said Friday during her weekly radio address.

The Democratic governor announced the Michigan Prescription Discount Card, called the MI-Rx Card, during her 2004 State of the State address. At that time, she said it could help up to 200,000 people without insurance cut the cost of their medication by up to 20 percent.

The service is free, and the card can be used at more than 2,000 pharmacies across the state. It was launched one year ago this week.

The program is open to senior citizens and working families who don't have insurance and earn less than the state's median income: \$56,000 a year for a family of four or \$28,000 for an individual.

Applications are available at pharmacies or by calling the program toll-free at (866) 755-6479.

United Way kicks off its Born Learning campaign

Educational program helps children develop

Friday, September 23, 2005

BY LISA CAROLIN

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

The Livingston County United Way kicked off its Born Learning campaign this week at the First Presbyterian Children's Care Center in Howell. Born Learning is part of the national United Way's effort to create learning opportunities for children, 0-5, in their daily activities.

"We are excited to see a national program of this magnitude being brought to our local level," said Nancy Rosso, executive director of the local United Way.

"With the studies showing that critical brain development in children takes place between the years of birth to 3 years, the positive day-to-day interaction we have with our children is so very important. It's proven that when children are given early educational opportunities, they have more of a chance for success when they reach kindergarten age.

"We are working together to encourage parents and the community to nurture children's minds, hearts and bodies because 85 percent of our brain capacity is developed by the time we are 5 years old," said Emily Ladd, coordinator for Great Start Livingston.

Great Start Livingston is among the partners in the county for the Born Learning campaign, which also include Citizens Insurance, the Livingston Educational Service Agency, the Livingston County Department of Public Health, the Livingston 4C Council, and Head Start. Jennifer Johnson, a financial analyst at Citizens Insurance, also is a new parent, and spoke at the campaign kick off Tuesday.

"I used the Born Learning Web site and as a result started reading books to our baby right away," said Johnson. "His doctor could not believe that he was turning pages when he was 6 months old."

Citizens Insurance Regional President Michael Britt presented Rosso with a check for \$15,000 to go toward the Born Learning program.

For more information on Born Learning, go to the Web site www.bornlearning.org or contact Great Start Livingston at (517) 540-6829.

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STATE OF MICHIGAN

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

MARIANNE UDOW
DIRECTOR

News Release

Contact: Stepheni Schlinker or Maureen Sorbet (517) 373-7394

Department of Human Services' Workers Leave for Alabama Will Help Hurricane Survivors Obtain Vital Food Assistance

September 23, 2005

LANSING - Twenty-five workers from the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) departed for Alabama Thursday to assist their colleagues in the Alabama Department of Human Resources in serving survivors of Hurricane Katrina, DHS director Marianne Udow announced today.

"In the days since Hurricane Katrina, hundreds of our DHS workers have asked for the opportunity to serve the victims of the hurricane," Udow said. "I was very moved – though not surprised – by this response. During my tenure with DHS, I've learned that 'above and beyond the call of duty' is an everyday occurrence in this department."

The request for workers on loan came through Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), a mutual aid agreement and partnership that provides a way for states to send personnel who are trained and schooled to help with disaster relief efforts in other states.

The 25 are part of a group of 51 workers from four states – Michigan, Kentucky, Ohio, and Maryland – traveling to Alabama to assist with the disaster food stamp program. After a training session Thursday, the volunteers will work near Mobile, Alabama from Friday, September 23, through Tuesday, September 27.

"As we thank these workers for stepping forward, I also want to salute the DHS leaders and workers who have been on the job night and day since the hurricane, resettling evacuees who have come to Michigan through the efforts of the FEMA, or on their own to be near family," said Udow. "Hour by hour, these workers have comforted evacuees as they helped them establish themselves in apartments, in schools, and in communities – and formed real bonds with them in the process."

Latest numbers from around the state put the number of Hurricane Katrina evacuees in Michigan at over 2,500. Of those, more than 1,000 have sought help from DHS. Just over 300 came to Michigan through FEMA; most of these have been resettled around the state in housing offered by citizens and businesses, many at no cost. The state's list of housing offers now tops 15,000.

For more information go to www.michigan.gov/dhs



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 22, 2005

Contact: Maureen Sorbet
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Granholt Administration helps to expand child day care options for low-income families in 51 counties

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Marianne Udow today announced \$459,291 in grants to licensed or registered child care providers who serve children from low-income families. Udow said the 135 grants range in amounts from \$1,241-\$15,000 and includes start up grants for 21 new providers.

“Child care will help ensure our children get the great start in life they deserve,” said Granholm. “These grants increase access to quality child care and increase early childhood options for low-income parents.”

The grant program, called Enhanced Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP), is funded by the DHS and is aimed at increasing the quality and quantity of child care in Michigan communities. The Michigan 4C (Community Coordinated Child Care) Association, a partner with the DHS in helping public assistance recipients stay in the work force, administers the grant program.

Grants were awarded to new child care centers in 14 counties and for proposals with existing providers that address equipment, computers, and resources to build child care capacity, support child development at child care centers and homes, and improve staff knowledge and caregiver techniques. EQUIP grants help child care providers develop service during afternoon, evening, and weekend work shifts, which is critical for working families, and ways to care for infants and children with special needs. Provider start-up grants help communities better meet the needs of their low-income families.

“The grants support low-income families with children as adults work toward financial independence,” said Udow.

Working collaboratively with the DHS, the Michigan 4C Association awards EQUIP grants to increase licensed child care capacity across the state. In June the DHS awarded \$661,371 to 173 child care providers. From fiscal year 1998 through the current funding cycle, the DHS has distributed more than \$8.2 million in EQUIP grants funds. A list of current grantees follows. For more information on EQUIP grantees in any county, contact the Michigan 4C Association at (800) 950-4171.

See the attachment for current grantees. Read more on child care services at www.michigan.gov/daycare

Start Up Grants

County	Program Name	Last Name	First Name	City	Grant
Bay	Kids Campus	Wendling	Lianne	Pinconning	\$3,500
Branch		Randall-Rose	Pamela	Coldwater	\$3,562
Dickinson		Shogren	Mandy	Iron Mountain	\$3,499
Genesee		Cotter	Nickole	Fenton	\$3,500
Grand Traverse		Beebe	Nicole	Grawn	\$3,500
Gratiot		Schlarf	Gina	St. Louis	\$3,500
Gratiot		Hitsman	Laura	Alma	\$3,500
Ingham		Weber	Jessica	Mason	\$2,810
Kent		Russell	Christie	Comstock Park	\$3,500
Kent		Allard	Michelle	East Grand Rapids	\$3,460
Livingston	The Hop Inc	Smith	Stephanie	Howell	\$3,500
Macomb		Tisdale	Jill	Warren	\$2,326
Macomb		Walker	Sharon	Mt. Clemens	\$2,487
Macomb		Francis	Theresa	Warren	\$3,500
Muskegon		Thorsen	Julie	Muskegon	\$10,315
Muskegon		Elders	Tracey	Whitehall	\$3,500
Muskegon		Biesiada	Becky	Norton Shores	\$1,655
Otsego		Latuszek	Jacqueline	Gaylord	\$3,500
Schoolcraft		Petrelus	Kristin	Manistique	\$3,500
Wayne	Kids Now Learning & Development	Wheeler	Shonta	Wayne	\$14,970
Wayne	Christ Good Shepherd PS	Kreis	Kelly	Canton	\$15,000
					\$98,584

ROUND III
EQUIP GRANTS

County	Program Name	Last Name	First Name	City	Grant	Project
Allegan		VanderBand	Rosemary	Allegan	\$3,500	infant & outdoor equipment, fence, indoor activities, storage
Alpena		Ellsworth	Michele	Alpena	\$3,498	infant & outdoor equipment, storage, indoor activities
Arenac		Earhart	Stacy	Standish	\$1,445	outdoor equipment, cots
Barry		Kidder	Holly	Middleville	\$2,795	egress window
Barry		Hola	JeNae	Hastings	\$3,301	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
Bay		Ford	Lorcie	Pinconning	\$1,743	infant, safety & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Bay		Schultz	Cassie	Bay City	\$2,463	classroom furniture, indoor activities, outdoor equipment
Bay		Mason	Jennie	Bay City	\$3,500	infant & outdoor equipment, fence, indoor activities
Bay	YWCA Early Childhood Center	Messing	Tracy	Bay City	\$3,410	indoor activities, outdoor equipment
Berrien	Emanuel, Cande	Rutherford	Cande	Coloma	\$3,398	fence, outdoor equipment, indoor activities, bed
Berrien		Gonzalez-Staggs	Sondra	Eau Claire	\$3,134	infant equipment, indoor activities
Berrien		Reed	Nickole	Buchanan	\$3,500	remodeling
Berrien		Peterman	Mary	New Buffalo	\$3,463	storage, outdoor equipment, indoor activities, computer
Berrien	Kidzone Preschool	Pepple	Karla	Benton Harbor	\$3,412	classroom lofts, step stool
Berrien		Rockette	Yaszdi	Benton Harbor	\$3,495	carpeting, infant equipment, storage
Calhoun	A Place for Children	Ryan	Patricia	Battle Creek	\$3,494	computer, fence, indoor activities
Cass		Bannow	Phyllis	Dowagiac	\$3,283	outdoor equipment, storage, indoor activities
Cass	King's Kingdom Daycare	King	Christina	Niles	\$2,389	outdoor equipment
Cheboygan		Wichlacz	Angela	Cheboygan	\$3,486	indoor activities, outdoor equipment
Clinton		Baatz	Holly	St. Johns	\$3,500	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, computer
Crawford		Nicholas	Michelle	Grayling	\$3,484	storage, outdoor equipment
Dickinson		Phillips	Marsha	Iron Mountain	\$3,452	carpeting, outdoor equipment, car seat
Eaton		Maffett	Nateea	Lansing	\$3,138	safety equipment, indoor activities
Eaton		Snell	Brenda	Lansing	\$3,496	remodeling air purifiers, computer, infant equipment
Genesee	Great Beginnings Childcare	Smith	Cassie	Mt. Morris	\$1,819	fence, outdoor equipment
Genesee		Tear	Michelle	Davison	\$1,951	storage, indoor activities
Genesee		Simpson	Joyce	Burton	\$2,980	outdoor equipment, fence
Grand Traverse		Croy	Kristy	Grawn	\$3,285	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
Gratiot		Smith	Julie	Ithaca	\$1,889	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Gratiot		Terwilliger	Jennifer	Alma	\$2,379	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Huron	Pigeon Children's Discovery Center	Rooney	Janet	Pigeon	\$3,299	outdoor equipment
Ingham	Higher Ground Child Care Center	Phillips	Yvonne	Lansing	\$2,844	computer, fence, outdoor equipment
Ionia		Vallad	Rhonda	Fenwick	\$3,500	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Iron		Golfis	Holly	Iron River	\$3,007	outdoor equipment
Isabella		Wilson	Tracee	Mt. Pleasant	\$2,686	storage, infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Jackson		Lebel	Wendy	Horton	\$3,492	fence, indoor equipment
Kalamazoo	Tam's Sunshine House	Craven	Tambra	Kalamazoo	\$3,500	indoor activities, infant equipment, carpeting
Kalamazoo		Boonstra	Tamara	Portage	\$3,356	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
Kalamazoo		Bowman	Sheila	Portage	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Kalamazoo	Kiddie Komfort Preschool	Leiter	David	Kalamazoo	\$3,484	classroom furniture, teacher resources, computer

ROUND III
EQUIP GRANTS

Kalamazoo	West	Deborah	Kalamazoo	\$2,995	fence, egress window
Kent	Huntoon	Christina	Wyoming	\$3,445	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Kent	Stout	Shelley	Wyoming	\$3,474	outdoor & infant equipment, sink
Kent	Lukasiewicz	Charlotte	Grand Rapids	\$3,461	outdoor equipment, storage, indoor activities
Kent	Tendercare Learning Center	Nelson	Bonnie	\$3,496	infant equipment
Kent		Priest	Darcey	\$3,500	indoor activities, computer
Kent		Smith	Lynette	\$3,462	outdoor & infant equipment, computer, table & chairs
Kent		Mendenhall	Angela	\$3,044	storage, indoor activities
Kent		Wygarden	Michelle	\$1,241	outdoor equipment
Kent		Smith	Celestina	\$3,435	remodeling, storage
Kent	Alphabet Soup Day Care Center	Rhodes	Janice	\$3,000	computer, indoor activities
Kent	Brilliant Beginnings CDC	Bentley	Kristen	\$3,500	classroom furniture, indoor activities
Lake		Guy	Teresa & Walter	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Lapeer		Wisniewski	Marcy	\$3,201	outdoor equipment, computer, indoor activities
Lenawee		Kirkland	Kristi	\$2,792	fence
Livingston		Newton	Deborah & Jason	\$3,500	outdoor & infant equipment, indoor activities, storage
Mackinac	Fun Time Daycare Center	Blair	Michelle	\$3,450	indoor activities, outdoor equipment
Macomb		McIntosh	Carrie	\$2,991	outdoor & infant equipment, indoor activities
Macomb		Burnett	Cristine	\$3,273	indoor activities, computer
Macomb		Rainey	Diane	\$3,500	indoor activities, infant equipment
Manistee		Banicki	Sharon	\$3,311	indoor activities, outdoor equipment
Marquette		Middling	Teresa	\$3,250	sofa, indoor activities
Mecosta		Holdsworth	Nancy	\$3,326	fence
Monroe		Worden	Kimberly	\$3,235	infant equipment, indoor activities
Muskegon		Yaussey	Amber	\$2,733	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
Muskegon		Jahn	Kristina	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, computer, beds, air purifier
Muskegon		Lewis	Dawn	\$3,497	fence, outdoor equipment, indoor activities, remodeling
Muskegon		Porter	Tracy	\$3,362	outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage, printer
Muskegon	All-Stars Child Care Center	Reasoner	Deb	\$3,500	safety & infant equipment, computer, storage
Newaygo		Anton	Kathey	\$3,452	air purifier, storage, indoor activities
Oakland	Children of the Rainbow	Newkirk	Zelma	\$2,793	outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Oakland		Cummings	Michele	\$3,500	egress window
Oakland	Building Blocks Preschool	Gabli	Suzanne	\$3,460	indoor activities, storage
Oakland		Volk	Pamela	\$1,865	outdoor equipment, storage
Oakland		Clifton	Cheri	\$3,500	printer, infant equipment, storage
Oakland	Rhymes & Reasons Nursery	Williams	Crystal	\$3,500	classroom furniture
Oakland	Lane's Day Care	Rodgers	Marcia	\$3,500	computer, fence, infant & outdoor equipment
Ontonagon		Miller	Theresa	\$3,500	infant & outdoor equipment, computer, indoor activities
Otsego		Thayer	Darla	\$3,500	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Ottawa		Strengtholt	Nancy	\$3,443	fence, outdoor & infant equipment
Ottawa		Struntz	Melissa	\$3,481	Fence, outdoor equipment, computer

ROUND III
EQUIP GRANTS

Ottawa		Chittenden	Alicia	West Olive	\$3,326	indoor activities, infant & outdoor equipment
Ottawa	Antioch Peacemakers Learning Ctr	James	Ronald	Grand Haven	\$3,500	carpeting, indoor activities
Ottawa		Mendez	Albina	Holland	\$2,502	computer, outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
Ottawa		Berens	Randine	West Olive	\$1,447	computer, indoor activities, infant equipment
Roscommon		Holmes-Robinson	Dawn	Houghton Lake	\$3,500	outdoor & infant equipment, computer, fence
Saginaw		Ward	Crystal	Saginaw	\$3,474	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
Sanilac		Lisek	Tammy	Croswell	\$3,392	indoor activities, computer, classroom furniture
Sanilac		Thompson	Rachel	Melvin	\$3,495	infant & outdoor equipment, indoor activities, storage
St. Clair		Bailey	Deborah	Clyde	\$3,488	fence, indoor activities
St. Clair		Pullman	Liana	St. Clair	\$3,135	computer, outdoor & infant equipment
St. Joseph	Harker's Daycare	Harker	Angela	Sturgis	\$2,388	fence, indoor activities, classroom furniture
St. Joseph		Ellis	Tiffany	Sturgis	\$3,500	storage, outdoor equipment, indoor activities, classroom furniture
St. Joseph	Tiny Tots Day Care	Hickman	Bridget	Sturgis	\$3,010	infant & outdoor equipment, computer
Van Buren		Sterling	Heidi & Brian	Mattawan	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, indoor activities, flooring
Van Buren		Emmert	Kimberly	Lawton	\$3,499	carpeting, infant equipment, vacuum, table & chairs
Washtenaw		Dari	Miassar	Ann Arbor	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, storage, car seats
Washtenaw	Perry Nursery School	Hilton	Sandra	Ann Arbor	\$3,491	indoor activities, storage
Washtenaw	Star's Daycare	Johnson	Starleatha	Ypsilanti	\$3,066	computer, storage, infant equipment, classroom furniture
Washtenaw	TC Daycare	Comer	Anita	Ypsilanti	\$2,225	computer, outdoor equipment, classroom furniture
Washtenaw		Flournoy	Chamell	Ypsilanti	\$3,434	fence, outdoor equipment
Washtenaw		Maggard	Melissa	Belleville	\$3,466	egress window, loft, storage
Wayne		Ingram-Gholston	Shantel	Detroit	\$3,500	storage, indoor activities, infant equipment
Wayne	Village of Shiny Stars	Brannon	Sonya	Detroit	\$3,500	indoor activities, computer, wood chips
Wayne	Happy Day Child Care	Khelokian	Marie	Detroit	\$3,500	outdoor equipment
Wayne	Carrecia's Creative Child Care	Watkins	Carrecia	Detroit	\$3,499	safety & infant equipment, indoor activities
Wayne		Williams	Donna	Detroit	\$1,669	outdoor equipment
Wayne		Smith	Rochea	Inkster	\$1,851	outdoor equipment
Wayne		Larry	Deborah	Detroit	\$3,282	classroom furniture, indoor activities, air purifier
Wayne		Campbell	Betty	Detroit	\$3,500	indoor activities, storage
Wayne	Kidz Zone	Ferguson	Roy	Dearborn Hgts	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, indoor activities
Wayne	Angel Land at New Bethel Annex	Henderson	Terrie	Detroit	\$3,500	infant equipment, indoor activities
Wexford	Noah's Ark Day School	Thiebaut	Melissa	Cadillac	\$3,350	classroom lofts
Wexford		Brackenrich	Jennifer	Cadillac	\$3,500	outdoor equipment, storage, indoor activities
					\$360,707	

IN BRIEF

State agencies sue day care center

Two state agencies filed a civil lawsuit Thursday against a Grand Ledge day care center and its operator.

The suit, filed in Ingham County Circuit Court by the Department of Environmental Quality and the attorney general's office, alleges that Kids University Child Care violated the state's Safe Drinking Water Act. The center did not provide bottled water for drinking and food preparation and didn't notify the public after violating the drinking water standard in June 2004, officials said. Operator Deborah Howland did not return a phone call seeking comment Thursday night.

"The presence of E. coli in the drinking water of this facility is a clear cause for concern, and it is disappointing that reducing this risk to the children was not a higher priority for the management," DEQ Director Steven Chester said. The agencies are seeking civil penalties. Kids University has been closed since Oct. 27, 2004, when the DEQ ordered closure of the water supply after water samples tested positive for coliform bacteria.

Governor Granholm Calls for Extradition of Kentucky Man for Unpaid Child Support

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today announced that she has initiated proceedings to extradite a Kentucky man for failing to pay more than \$50,000 in child support, a felony crime punishable by four years in prison.

Patrick Paul Murray was arrested by law enforcement officials in Allen County, Kentucky in July. In March 1991, Murray was ordered by the Barry County Circuit Court to pay \$50 per week for the support of his minor child but he has failed to comply. As of August 2005 his unpaid child support obligations totaled \$53,932.27.

“Mr. Murray has failed to meet his responsibility to support his child, and that has consequences,” Granholm said. “The state of Michigan will use all the tools at its disposal to ensure that parents provide for their children.”

Upon return to Michigan, Murray will face prosecution. In Michigan, non-support of a child is a felony punishable by up to four years in prison and/or a \$2,000 fine. Since taking office, Governor Granholm has requested the return, through the extradition process, of more than 100 parents who have failed to support their children as ordered by courts in Michigan.

Under the Uniform Criminal Extradition Act, the power to demand extradition of a fugitive who has fled from justice in Michigan and taken refuge in another state is vested in the governor. After receiving extradition documents, Kentucky officials can issue a warrant delivering the fugitives into the custody of Michigan authorities.

To encourage parents to pay their past due child support, the state is offering an amnesty period beginning October 1, 2005. Under the new law, parents who owe past due child support in Michigan will have a 90-day window to avoid state criminal and civil enforcement penalties. Penalties that have already been initiated will be waived with the exception of felony prosecutions or in circumstances where a delinquent parent has already been arrested due to failure or refusal to pay past due child support.

The amnesty program does not affect current support obligations. The amnesty program was established by Public Act 584 of 2004 and sponsored by Rep. Alexander Lipsey.

For more information regarding the amnesty program, parents can contact their local Friend of the Court office, call 1-866-540-0008, or visit www.michigan.gov/dhs and click on “Child Support.”

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

For the week beginning September 26, 2005

Information Pertinent to Legislative and State Department Activities Since 1906

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

House Family and Children Services, (Chr. Stahl, 373-7256),
Rm. 327 HOB, 9 a.m.

HB 5100 MILITARY PARENTAL RIGHTS (Jones) Clarifies parental
custody rights of persons in military service.

Foster home accused of embezzling from seniors

PUBLISHED: September 23, 2005

By Amanda Lee
Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A New Baltimore facility was arraigned this week for allegedly misusing funds from adult foster care patients.

Horizon Residential Centers Inc. has been charged with one felony count of embezzlement from a vulnerable adult of more than \$1,000 but less than \$20,000, Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox announced.

"Michigan's vulnerable adults and their families deserve the highest level of care and the highest level of trust from their providers," Cox said in a statement. "I am committed to ensuring that our most vulnerable receive the protection they deserve."

The criminal charges against the facility carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and/or a \$10,000 fine or three times the value of the money or property involved, whichever is greater.

The charges against Horizon Residential Centers, located at 36355 Main St., were levied as a result of an audit conducted of residents' personal accounts under the control of the corporation from 2000 to 2003. The investigation was referred to the Attorney General's Health Care Fraud Division in 2004.

The audit itself was conducted jointly by Macomb Oakland Regional Centers (MORC), Macomb County Community Mental Health (MCCMH) and the Office of Recipient Rights (ORR), which disclosed \$139,000 in unsubstantiated expenditures from residents' accounts.

The corporation's owner, Marie Jo Mellon, 65, of New Baltimore, was also arraigned on one count of misdemeanor embezzlement from a vulnerable adult for an amount less than \$200. The criminal charge carries a maximum penalty of 93 days in jail and/or three times the value of the money or property involved -- whichever is greater.

At the time of her arraignment Wednesday in front of 42-2 District Court Judge Paul A. Cassidy, Mellon pleaded no contest to the charge and was found guilty and fined \$300. According to the Attorney General's office, Mellon also agreed to guarantee Horizon's payment of \$139,000 in restitution within 30 months and produced a \$25,000 down payment.

The corporation waived its preliminary examination and will be arraigned at 1:30 p.m. on Oct. 3rd in Macomb County Circuit Court.

Police nab first Katrina frauds

Jackson Citizen Patriot

Friday, September 23, 2005

Jackson police say they have nabbed their first Hurricane Katrina frauds -- a Jackson couple who allegedly collected \$3,500 in aid for a house they do not own.

"They told the Red Cross their house in Mississippi had been destroyed by Hurricane Katrina," Lt. Aaron Kantor said. "They apparently had moved back to Michigan a few months ago after their house trailer was repossessed."

The couple, a 26-year-old man and 27-year-old woman, applied for emergency funds and received \$1,500 from Red Cross and \$2,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Kantor said.

Someone who knows the couple tipped off the Red Cross, and agency officials contacted city police. Kantor said police arrested the man on an unrelated warrant, and the woman has not been arrested.

Investigators have presented to prosecutors potential fraud charges against both suspects.

Posted at 01:24 PM ET, 09/22/2005

GOP to Audit the Poor?

Joel Achenblog
The Washington Post

When I go to the Hill later I'll try to ferret out, or weasel my way into, the answer to the burning question of how we are going to pay for Katrina relief. Give the House Republicans some credit for actually specifying what they'd cut in the way of spending. So many politicians hide behind generalities or vague references to pork or waste or earmarks or whatnot. At least you know where some of these House Republicans stand. Which is: We should raise taxes on the poor. That, at least, is one possible interpretation of the list they produced yesterday. In case you missed it, here are some of the items on their Whack List:

- Delay the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill for One year
- Increase Allowable Co-pays in Medicaid
- Block Grant Medicaid Acute Services
- Reduce Farm Payment Acreage by 1%
- Eliminate Subsidized Loans to Graduate Students
- Increase Medicare Part B Premium from 25% to 30%
- Level Funding for the Peace Corps
- Eliminate the Federal Anti-Drug Advertising
- Eliminate Federal Funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting
- Eliminate State Grants for Safe and Drug-Free Schools
- Eliminate the Even Start Program
- Eliminate Teen Funding Portion of Title X Family Planning
- Eliminate Funding for Penile Implants Under Medicare

That's just a sample. Some of these items would save a lot of money, some would save very little. But there's one item that the GOP believes would save \$85 billion over 10 years:

"Verify Income of Earned Income Tax Credit Participants"

This appears to be a proposal to audit people who claim to be poor, to make sure they are truly poor and deserving of the tax credit. I'll try to find out more to make sure I'm not missing some essential element of the idea. The GOP apparently believes that massive fraud exists in this program, and that we could ease the federal deficit by aggressively collecting taxes from the not-truly-poor -- people who could be defined as the merely non-affluent, the not-doing-so-well, the just-scraping-by. But not "poor." The GOP wants these posers to pay up. [And then the GOP will eliminate the Estate Tax, but that's another matter entirely.]